

The Kings MAIESTIES Letter to the Lords
Grace of Canterbury, touching Preaching,
and Preachers.

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Most Reuerend Father in God, Right trustie and right intirely
beloued Councillour, Wee greet yee well. Forasmuch as the
abuse and extravagancies of Preachers in the Pulpit, haue
been at all times repressed in this Land by some Act of Coun-
cell or State, with the aduise and resolution of Graue and Reuerend
Preachers, in somuch as the very licensing of Preachers, had beginning by
order in the Starre-Chamber the eight day of Iuly, in the nineteenth yeare
of King Henry the eight, Our Noble Predecessor: And whereas at
this present diuers young Students, by reading of late Writers and un-
grounded Doctrines, doe preach many times unprofitable, and ^{for} ~~unprofitable~~ ^{broach} ~~unprofitable~~, so
distracting, and dangerous doctrine, to the scandall of the Church, and dis-
quieting of the State and present government: Wee, upon humble pre-
sentation vnto Vs of these ~~in~~ inconueniencies by your selfe, and sundry
other Graue and Reuerend Prelates of this Church, as of Our Princes
care and desire, for the extirpation of schisme and dissension growing from
these seedes; and for the setting of a religious and peaceable government
both of Church and State, Doe by these Our speciall Letters straightly
charge and command you, to vse all possible care and diligence, that these
limitations and cautions herewith sent you concerning Preachers, be due-
ly and strictly from henceforth obserued and put in practise, by the severall
Bishops in their severall Diocesses within your iurisdiction. And to this
end Our Pleasure is, that you send them forth severall copies of these di-
rections, to be by them speedily sent and communicated to every Parson,
Vicar, and Curate, Lecturer and Minister, in every Cathedrall and Par-
ish Church within their severall Diocesses; and that ye earnestly require them
to employ their utmost inducements for the performance of this so import-
ant businesse: letting them know, We haue a speciall eye to their proceeding,
and expect a strict accompt therof both from you and enery of them.
Our Letter shall be your sufficient warrant and discharge in this behalf.
Given vnder Our Signet at Our Castle of Windsor, the fourth
day of August, in the twentieth yeare of Our Reigne of England
in France, Ireland, and of Scotland the five and fiftieth.

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Directions concerning Preachers.

1 **T**hat no Preacher, vnder the degree and calling of a Bishop, or Deane of a Cathedrall or Collegiate Church, and they vpon the Kings dayes, and set Festiualls, doe take occasion by the expounding of any text of Scripture whatsoeuer, to fall into any set discourse or Common-place (otherwise then by opening the coherence and diuision of his Text) which shall not be comprehended and warranted, in essence, substance and effect, or naturall inference, within some one of the Articles of Religion set forth 1562. or in some of the Homelies set forth by authoritie in the Church of *England*, not onely for a helpe for the preaching Ministers, and for their further instructions: for the performance hereof, that they forthwith peruse ouer, and read diligently the said Articles, or the two bookes of Homilies.

2 That no Parson, Vicar, Curate, or Lecturer, shall preach any Sermon or Collation vpon Sunday and Holy-dayes in the afternoone, in any Cathedrall or Parish Church throughout the Kingdome, but vpon some part of the Catechisme, or some text taken out of the Creed, tenne Commandements, or Lords Prayer, (funerall Sermons onely excepted) and that those Preachers be most encouraged and approoued of, who spend these afternoone Exercises in examining the children in their Catechisme, and in expounding of the seuerall points and heads of the Catechisme, which is the most auncient and laudable custome of teaching in the Church of *England*.

3 That no Preacher of what title soeuer, vnder the degree of a Bishop or Deane at the least, do from henceforth presume to preach in any populous auditorie, the deepe points of Predestination, Election, Reprobation; of the Vniuersalitie, Efficacie, Resistabilitie, or Irresistabilitie of Gods grace, but leaue those Theames to be handled by the learned men, and that moderately, and modestly, by way of use and application, rather then by way of positie doctrine, as being fitter for the Schooles and Vniuersities, then for simple auditories.

That no Preacher of what title or denomination soeuer, shall from hence forth in any auditorie in this Kingdome, to limit, or bound out by positie doctrine, in any Lecture or Sermon,

Sermon, the Power, Prerogative, Jurisdiction, Authoritie, or Duty of Soueraigne Princes; or otherwise meddle with these matters of State, and the references betweene Princes and the People, then as they are instructed and presided in the Homilie of obedience, and in the rest of the Homilies and Articles of Religion, set forth as is before mentioned by publike authoritie; but rather confine themselves for those two heads, Faith and good Life, which are the subject of auncient Sermons and Homilies.

5 That no Preacher of what title or denomination soeuer, shall causlessly, and without imitation from the Text, fall into bitter inuectiues, and vndecent rayling speeches, against the persons of either Papist or Puritan, but modestly, and grauely when they are inuited or occasioned thereunto by their text of Scripture, free both the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of *England*, from the aspersions of either Aduersarie, especially where the auditors is suspected to be tainted with the one or the other infection.

6 Lastly, the Archbishops and Bishops of this kingdome (whom his Maiestie hath good cause to blame for their former remissnes) be more warie and choice in licensing Preachers, and reuoke all grants made to any Chancellor, Officiall, or Commissary ^{haue} licence in this kind. And that all the Lectures throughout the kingdome (a new body seuered from the auncient Clergie of England, as beeing neither Parson, Vicar, nor Curate) be licensed henceforth in the Court of faculties, onely vpon recommendation of the party from the Bishop of the Diocesse, vnder his hand and seale with a *Fiat* from the L. Archbish. of *Canterbury*, and a confirmation of the great seale of *England*: and that such as transgresse any of these directions, bee suspended by the L. Bish. of the Diocesse; in his default by the L. Archbish. of the prouince, *ab Officio & Beneficio*, for a yeare and a day, untill his Maiestie by aduice of the next Conuocation shall prescribe some further punishment.

The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his letters to the Bishop of the Diocesse of Norwich.

MY very good L. I doubt not but before this time, you haue receiued from me, the directions of his most excellent Maiesty concerning Preaching and Preachers, which are so graciously set downe, that no godly or discrete man, can otherwise then acknowledge, that they doe much tend to edification, if he doe not take them vpon report, but doe particularly consider the tenor of the words as they lie; and doe not giue an ill construction to that, which may receiue a faire interpretation. Notwithstanding, because some few Churchmen, and many of the people haue sinisterly conceiued (as we doe here find) that those Instructions doe tend to the restraint of the exercise of preaching, and doe in some sort abate the number of Sermons, and so consequently by degrees, doe make a breach to let in ignorance and superstition: His Maiestie in his Princely wisdom hath thought fit, that I should aduertise your Lordship of the graue and weighty reasons which induce his Highnes to prescribe that which is done. You are therefore to know, that his Maiestie being much troubled and greiued at the heart, to heare euery day of so many defectious from our Religion, both to Popery and Anabaptisme, or other painted of separation in some parties of this Kingdome, and considering with much admiration, what might be the cause thereof, especially in the Raigne of such a King, who doth so constantly professe himselfe an open Adversarie to the superstition of the one, and makes of the other: His Princely wisdom could fall vpon no one greater probability then the lightnes, affectednes, and unprofitablenesse of that kind of preaching, which hath bene of late years too much taken vp in Court, Vniuersitie, Citie, and Country. The usuall scope of very many Preachers is noted to be a soaring vp in points of Diuinity too high for the capacities of the people, or a mustering of much reading, or displaying of their wit, or an ignorant meddling with ciuil matters as well in the priuate of senerall Parishes and Corporations, as in the pulchke of the Kingdome: or a venting of their owne distastes, or a smothering up of those idle fancies, which in this blessed time of so long a peace, doe boile in the braines of unadvised people. And lastly by a rude and

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 and most happie reformation, did drive out the one, and kept out the other
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 To all these I am to adde, that it is his Maiesties Princely pleasure,
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 written in euery Registers Office. To that end, that euery Preacher of
 what denomination soeuer, may if he be pleased, take out copies of either
 of them with his owne hand gratis, paying nothing in the name of Fee, or
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